

Searching for Statutes Guide

Navigating Florida’s online statutes, laws, and Journal databases can be very overwhelming. We designed this sample guide to demonstrate how these tools work together and how you can easily find meaningful information in relation to Florida’s statutes, laws, and bills. The purpose of this guide is to help you understand the different “puzzle pieces” that are in each database. Once you know what those puzzle pieces are, you will be able to build the same puzzle no matter which piece you find first. In other words, your future research is likely to have several different starting points and you can work in many directions to find your answer. Throughout this sample guide, we are going to reference Florida Statute 256.16 and show you how we found the bill that created that statute (CS/CS/HB 427 in 2019). It is important to note that every tool that is mentioned in this sample guide is free and available to the public.

Statutes

The Florida Statutes are the codified, enacted laws of Florida and can be found online at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>.



Laws of Florida (Chapter Law)

The Laws of Florida are the final text of bills which became law and can be found online at <http://laws.flrules.org/>.



Bill Information/Text

A bill is a proposed change to Florida law. Any legislator, all standing committees and subcommittees, and some select committees may introduce bills. A listing of currently proposed bills can be found online at <https://myfloridahouse.gov/>.



Journal Indices (If needed)

The Journal, which is the legal record of the respective Florida Legislative body can be found online at <https://sb.flleg.gov/>. Because the Journal is typically over a thousand pages each session, there are indexes available to assist in searches.



Florida Channel Video

The Florida Channel, found on <https://thefloridachannel.org/> is Florida’s public affairs programming service. Coverage began with the 1996 Legislative Session and was expanded in 2002 to cover all of Florida’s state government.

Florida Statutes

Website: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us>

The Florida Statutes are the codified, statutory laws of Florida. At the bottom of every statute is a section entitled “history”. This section describes the Chapter Law section that amends the statute.

If you have the Statute number and are trying to find the bill that created the amending section of Chapter Law, the history section is a good place to look. The next section shows how to search for bill number within a section of Chapter Law.

The screenshot shows the Florida Legislature's website interface. At the top, it says "Online Sunshine" and "Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature". The date is August 28, 2020. A search bar shows "2019" and "256.16" with a "Search" button. A "Select Year" dropdown is set to "2019" with a "Go" button. The main content area is titled "The 2019 Florida Statutes" and displays "Title XVIII PUBLIC LANDS AND PROPERTY" and "Chapter 256 FLAGS". The specific statute is "256.16 Honor and Remember flag.—". The text of the statute is as follows:

(1) The Honor and Remember flag is designated as the state’s emblem of the service and sacrifice of the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have given their lives in the line of duty.

(2) The flag may be displayed:

(a) At the following locations:

1. Any state-owned building at which the United States flag is displayed.
2. Any state-owned military memorials.
3. Any other state-owned location.

(b) On the following days:

1. Veterans Day, November 11.
2. Gold Star Mother’s Day, the last Sunday in September.
3. A day on which a member of the United States Armed Forces who is a resident of this state loses his or her life in the line of duty.

(c) In a manner designed to ensure visibility to the public.

(d) With no more than two additional flags when displayed together on a flagpole.

(3) A flag displayed pursuant to this section must be manufactured in the United States.

(4) A local government may display the flag in accordance with paragraphs (2)(b), (c), and (d) at any local government building at which the United States flag is displayed and at any other local government location it deems appropriate.

(5) By July 1, 2020, a department or an agency responsible for a location specified in paragraph (2)(a), or a local government pursuant to subsection (4), may adopt regulations as necessary to carry out this section. Such regulations may not require an employee to report to work solely to display the flag.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2019-145.

[Search Tips from Online Sunshine](#)

The section of Chapter Law that has created / amended the statute

Laws of Florida (Chapter Law)

Website: <http://laws.flrules.org/>

The Laws of Florida are where you will find the final text of bills that became law (the enrolled version) and how they amended the Florida Statutes.

The Chapter Law Number once a bill becomes law is a seven-digit code that is assigned by the Secretary of State. It denotes the year passed and order in which it was acted upon by the Governor.

The bill number associated with the Chapter Law is located in the right most column (see example above).

So, if you have a statute and want to see what bill number it derives from, you would go to the history of that statute, then to the Laws of Florida to find the relating Chapter Law.

As with all other legislation, an underlined section has added language to a statute while a strikethrough is removing language from a statute.

2019

Year

2019

Regular Session

Chapter Law Number	Size	Description	Bill Number
 Ch_2019-141.pdf	80 KB	Department of Environmental Protection	H 5401
 Ch_2019-142.pdf	142 KB	Child Welfare	H 7099
 Ch_2019-143.pdf	48 KB	Infectious Disease Elimination Programs	S 366
 Ch_2019-144.pdf	43 KB	Military-friendly Initiatives	S 620
 Ch_2019-145.pdf	34 KB	Honor and Remember Flag	H 427
 Ch_2019-146.pdf	59 KB	E911 Systems	H 441
 Ch_2019-147.pdf	48 KB	Alzheimer's Disease	H 449
 Ch_2019-148.pdf	37 KB	Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans	H 501
 Ch_2019-149.pdf	72 KB	Commercial Motor Vehicles	H 725

Bill Numbers

Website: <https://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/bills.aspx>

A listing of all bills going back to the 1998 Regular Session can be found on the House's website (link above), for prior years of bills not passed you will need to contact the [State Records Center](#). As with all other legislation, an underlined section has been added to statute while a strikethrough is removing language from a statute.

Please Note: Each bill number only lasts for the Session in which it was filed, in addition, starting for the 1990 Regular Session, all House bills have been odd-numbered and all Senate bills have been even-numbered. Prior to 1990, you will have to look at the bill prefix to determine its house of origin.

The House's website includes a search function: number, type of bill, statute amended, session, sponsor, etc. This search gives the ability to isolate the specific bills. The information provided on the bill webpage includes:

- **Short Title**, this is what the bill relates to.
- **Version(s) of the bill**, there will be multiple versions if the bill is amended in a committee or on the floor.
- **Vote history**, these are votes taken on the vote board on amendments/motions/final passage of the bill.
- **Staff analysis**, committee staff publish two analyses each time a bill is heard in a committee, one before and one after the meeting.
- **History of actions taken**, the House has a [tracking tool](#) so that each time an action does occur you can be notified.
- **Statutes referenced**



FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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[Home](#) > [Bills](#) > [CS/CS/HB 427 \(2019\)](#)

CS/CS/HB 427 (2019) - Honor and Remember Flag

General Bill by State Affairs Committee and Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee and Gregory (CO-SPONSORS) Altman; Cortes, J.; Driskell; Duran; Fetterhoff; Fischer; Good; Gottlieb; Grall; Grant, M.; Hill; Killebrew; Sabatini; Smith, D.; Willhite; Zika

Honor and Remember Flag: Designates Honor & Remember flag as state emblem; authorizes display of flag at specified locations, on specified days, & in specified manner; requires flags to be manufactured in U.S.; provides for adoption of certain regulations.

Effective Date: January 1, 2020

Last Event: Chapter No. 2019-145 on Thursday, June 27, 2019 1:08 PM

[How an Idea Becomes a Law](#)

Journal Indices

Website: [https://sb.fleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm\\$vid=House:all](https://sb.fleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm$vid=House:all)

The House and Senate Journals going back in history include a number of indices that can be used in lieu of electronic means. Included amongst those are the Numeric Index, Subject Index, and Member Sponsor Index. These can be found at the back of each year's journals.

Numeric Index

This index includes each bill organized by bill number. In each entry is the short title, sponsors, the final status of the bill by abbreviation, and the pages of the Journal that the bill can be found on. The last one is particularly useful, because it is the only index that contains the page numbers a bill is located on. Important to note is that each bolded page is where a vote on the bill was recorded in the Journal.

427 Honor and Remember Flag (State Affairs Committee, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, Gregory) 53, 290, 292, 294, 364, 655, 658, 659, 667, 671, **717**, 719, 827, 1065, 1498, 1501, 1502 CH 2019-145

Subject Index

This index breaks down the bills that were filed on a specific topic. Bills that became law are bolded with their Chapter Law number next to them. This index is particularly useful when looking at historic journals and you do not have a bill number to reference in your search.



PUBLIC LANDS AND PROPERTY

Capital Relocation Study, S492
Citizen Support and Direct-support Organizations, S7062
Construction Bonds, S1200, **H1247(2019-94)**
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, H1215
Department of Environmental Protection, S1502, **H5401(2019-141)**
Department of Environmental Protection Citizen Support Organizations, S7024
Florida Statutes, **S4(2019-3)**, **S8(2019-5)**
Florida Statutes/General, **S4(2019-3)**, H7041
Florida Statutes/Rulemaking Repeals, **S8(2019-5)**, H7045
Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame, S748, H6049
Honor and Remember Flag, S718, **H427(2019-145)**
Implementing the 2019-2020 General Appropriations Act, **S2502(2019-116)**
Local Government Public Construction Works, S806, H167
Monuments and Memorials, S288, H97
Off-highway Vehicles, **S310(2019-19)**, H659
Public Construction, S246, H101
Right of Entry, S1500, **H767(2019-85)**
Smoking in State Parks, S516
State Park Fees, S590, H809
Support Organizations, S7074, **H1121(2019-93)**
Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, **S1306(2019-62)**, H1359

GREGORY, TOMMY 73rd District

Sponsored: 427, 509, 537, 783, 997, 1135, 1315, 1345, 1347, 2409, 2411, 2413, 2415, 2417, 2419, 2421, 4249, 4579, 4689, 4923, 4925, 6049, 7077, 8059, 9029, 9031

Cosponsored: 73, 107, 205, 217, 225, 235, 403, 487, 501, 527, 713, 741, 807, 857, 1143, 1281, 1335, 7059, 7129

Local Bills: 1203

Committees: Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees: Civil Justice Subcommittee; Energy & Utilities Subcommittee; Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee; PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee



Member Sponsor Index

This index lists which bills each member sponsored, cosponsored, and the committees that they sat on. This index is particularly useful if you are searching for an overview of legislation that a member worked on in a given session. This information from the 1998 Regular Session is also available on the House's website with links to the committees and bills.

The Florida Channel

Website: <https://thefloridachannel.org/>

The Florida Channel is Florida's public access channel. Coverage began in 1996 and was expanded in 2002. For audio recordings going further back, they may be available from the [State Records Center](#).

The Florida Channel livestreams all legislative session and committee meetings. In addition, the website has a search function which allows for researchers to isolate specific committees, meetings and/or days of session. Researchers can also use the tags found at the bottom of each video to search and isolate specific bills or committees. Each tag corresponds to a bill that was discussed during that session day or committee meeting.

4/17/19 House Session Part 3

